

Council on Correction
Meeting Minutes
November 14, 2017

Attendance COC Members

Jane Hovington
Joe Paesani
Ed Perez
Jennifer Powell
Darryl Chambers
Muhammad Salaam
Richard Senato

DOC

Alan Grinstead, Deputy Commissioner
Mark Richman, Bureau Chief Healthcare Services
Jayme Gravell, Chief Media Relations

Sunset Committee

Julie Fedele

Public

Lori Alberts
Roland Laub
Ian Gronau

1. Call to Order

2. Introduction of Council members

The Council members were asked to introduce and give a little information about themselves

3. Approval of Minutes

The Chair asked for approval of the minutes. Richard Senato Abstained in that he was absent from the last meeting. Minutes were approved.

4. New Business

The Chair asked the Deputy Commissioner (DC) if there were additional issues which he needed to speak on from the last meeting. The DC expounded on the GTL contract and handed out information as to how the payment system functioned. A comparison of prices from other jurisdictions, that was previously requested, was discussed and Delaware was less expensive in most circumstances. A community member stated she still had questions regarding the fees assessed to the families. There is a cost to doing business and for the convenience of using this type of system. The ability to mail in money orders is still available for anyone not wishing to pay the fees.

A community member feels it is inconvenient to have to come to a visit early to put money on an inmate's account because anyone doing so must return to their car and leave the receipt and their credit card. She said they are not allowed to carry the credit card or receipt into prison. Mr. Senato stated it would be a security issue to carry a credit card into a visit. The question came up regarding the box for money orders being moved. Deputy Commissioner Grinstead stated it removed financial responsibilities and fees from the state and onto the vendor regarding fraudulent money orders and money. Deputy Commissioner Grinstead was asked to get a reading on whether it is at the discretion of the officers or is it a written policy regarding individuals having to return receipts to their cars as opposed to going on with their visit first.

Initial drafting of Bylaws

Ms. Powell will be submitting a draft of the bylaws to the council members to be discussed at the next meeting. There was discussion as to whether it has to be approved by the Governor's office. Mr. Paesani asked for a copy of the last by-laws which were drafted last year along with the new by-laws. We need to find records of the previous meetings. Mr. Senato said he has a copy of 2014 bylaws and all of the minutes which he will make available. We tabled the issue regarding the by-laws until the next meeting.

The question was presented asking if there was a statewide policy manual or does each prison have their own book of policies and procedure. Deputy Commissioner Grinstead said yes there is a statewide DOC policy manual but each institution also has site specific policies. There was discussion on whether or not there should be a subcommittee on policies and it was determined it was not needed as they are determined outside the realm of the council.

There was discussion regarding possibilities for Council subcommittees and Council involvement:

Statewide Community engagement- to include input from family members who have individuals who are incarcerated. Mr. Senato suggested we meet with the COAD and hear from them on the needs of officers. Mr. Salaam asked that we take into consideration the needs of the officers, inmates and families as well.

Chair Darryl Chambers received a call advising an inmate of Islamic faith was told if he missed 3 meetings, he would be removed from religious meetings. He had medical and was sent to medical at the same time as the religious service. Deputy Commissioner Grinstead was asked to check on whether it is a policy, and we could discuss it at the next meeting.

There was discussion as to whether a complaint to a Council member should have to be put in writing so the complainant's issues are clearly understood. In some instances it may have to be verbal when the complainant is unable to put their issue in writing, we will still take the issue to the council. The suggestion was made that the complaint could be taken and put in writing then presented back to the complainant to ensure that the complaint is being captured accurately. It would be typed and signed by the complainant.

Mr. Paesani asked if we can receive some of the reports, evaluations and studies done on the Dept. of Correction, one being the IADAPT program.

It was requested for Deputy Commissioner Grinstead for the next meeting to look into the issue on receipts, past minutes, religious service policies. Mr. Senato is to check to see if someone from COAD could meet with the council.

5. Public Comment

Public comment stressed the need for more jobs and education within the prisons.

6. Next Meeting

Tuesday, January 16, 2018 4:00pm – 6:00pm

Location: Department of Correction Administration Bldg., Room 300

Meeting adjourned: 6:00pm